

AFRICA GROUP STATEMENT TO THE 105TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL 25-28 NOVEMBER 2014

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Director General,**

1. Botswana takes the floor on behalf of the Africa Group.

2. The Africa Group would like to congratulate H. E. Ambassador Sammie Pesky Edicco of Ghana on his election as President of the 105th session of the IOM Council. We pledge our support to the President for a successful discharge of his mandate.

3. The Africa Group also takes this opportunity to congratulate the two Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur on their respective election to the bureau. We are confident that under the leadership and guidance of the entire bureau, we will achieve good results for the benefit of member States and migrants in particular. We commend His Excellency Ambassador Luis Enrique Chavez Basagoitia of Peru and the 104th Council Bureau for their successful tenure.

4. Similarly, the Africa Group commends Ambassador Mrs Laura Thompson on her election as Deputy Director General of IOM during the 104th Special Session of the IOM Council held in June this year. We will continue to count on her for the added value she brings to the IOM Team.

5. The Africa Group also congratulates Ambassador Swing for his leadership and the efficient management of the Organisation since his first election. We welcome the Director General's report on the work of the Organisation for the year 2014. We are particularly pleased by the positive results that the administrative reforms continue to bring to the IOM. The Organisation has effectively positioned itself as the leading Migration Agency in the world with a dynamic and positive impact in the field, covering almost the entire globe.

6. The Africa Group welcomes the New Framework for Migration Governance which synthesizes the IOM's strategic objectives with all other objectives including the High level Dialogue to guide its results- based approach to map the way forward. The Group will continue to study the document and to propose suggestions where necessary.

7. The Group notes and commends His Excellency Ambassador Luis Enrique Chavez Basagoitia of Peru for ably chairing the Working Group on IOM-UN Relations and the IOM Strategy. Discussions at the Working Group gave an insight to member States on the need to balance both sides of the argument as well as to reflect on the potential impact of any decisions to be made for the benefit of migrants themselves. The Africa Group is of the view that more time would be needed to reflect on the issues raised. Dialogue must therefore continue to be held on this matter. The Africa Group commends the Administration for its endeavour to facilitate discussions among member States and for providing high quality documents at the request of member States

8. The Africa Group notes the Organisation's ongoing policy implementation, operations and programmes intended to address prevailing challenges. We will appreciate working with the IOM on new policy initiatives on humanitarian framework, migration advocacy guidelines and migrant protection. We note the Director General's commitment to innovate and to bring fresh thinking to critical areas in global migration management. It is commendable that IOM has taken the initiative to draft a policy framework to address the pressing humanitarian issues and negative perceptions migrants are faced with in countries of transit and destination as well as the root causes of migration. It is advisable for the IOM to create modalities for member States to comment on such policy framework as Member States would have a critical role in its implementation.

9. It is noteworthy that IOM continues to provide assistance in formulation of migration policies and implementation of migration programmes geared toward better services for migrants. We recall the meeting co-organised by the IOM and the Permanent Delegation of the African Union in Geneva in October 2014 to promote consultations among the Regional Economic Communities to bridge the gaps in migration management on the African continent. The initiative also aimed at enabling Africa engage other Regional Economic Groups in resolving the various challenges that pertain to African migrants.

Mr. President

10. The year 2014 presented challenges to migration management. Thankfully the IOM responded swiftly and efficiently to the increasing number of new and ongoing crises and articulated a holistic approach through the Migration Crisis Operational Framework.

11. It is worth noting that IOM's response assisted recovery for victims of various crisis situations, notably, displaced persons caught-up in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic; South Sudan; Central Africa Republic; Mali; as well as the recovery efforts in Somalia and the ongoing Arab spring related challenges in North Africa. We also recall vividly, the assistance that the IOM extended to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

12. The Group extends appreciation and gratitude to the countries that availed funding for the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism which allowed the IOM to quickly respond to crisis and assist migrants. The Group notes that the majority of transfers from the Mechanism were for projects in Africa being:

- Emergency in Central African Republic
- Return Intention survey of Somali Refugees in Dadaab, Kenya
- Emergency Transportation Assistance to Vulnerable South Sudanese in Khartoum-Sudan

13. The Africa Group is grateful for the continued support given to Africa to address migration challenges at national level and welcomes IOM's response to the victims of Ebola virus disease in West Africa. We commend the IOM for the rapid deployment of staff and equipment in aid of the victims. The Ebola outbreak has taken the lives of thousands and has had major impact on the economies of the affected countries by disrupting socio-economic activities of ordinary people and limiting their mobility both within and across borders. All efforts by the international community and partners to support the response are crucial given that WHO has declared Ebola a public health emergency of international concern.

14. At the level of our continent, the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) was established following the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council which authorised the deployment of an AU led combined military and civilian humanitarian mission to affected countries. The ASEOWA strategic objectives are to enhance the capacity of existing national and international response mechanisms by mobilising technical expertise, human resource needs as well as political and financial support for the response efforts.

15. Thus far, the ASEOWA has deployed combined teams to all three affected countries and has engaged in advocacy to support public awareness and preventative measures across the affected region and the rest of Africa. ASEOWA has also rallied AU Member States, African civil society and the African private sector in supporting the continental efforts to stop the spread of Ebola.

Mr President;

16. The protection of the human rights of migrants remains a priority for Africa and has been solidified by relevant AU decisions and instruments including the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking on Human Beings, Especially Women and Children. Furthermore, as underscored in the African Common Position on Migration and Development, the fight against illegal or irregular migration must be waged within the context of strict observance of human rights and human dignity, of regional and international cooperation and shared responsibility among the countries of origin, transit and destination. This has been illustrated most recently by the convening of the AU Regional Conference to address human trafficking and smuggling in the horn of Africa held in Khartoum in October 2014 and organised in collaboration with the Government of Sudan, the IOM and UNHCR. The Conference adopted the Khartoum Declaration on the AU-Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants which, inter alia, emphasises the importance of political will, dialogue and cooperation at national, regional and international levels.

17. The Africa Group continues to reiterate that matters of human rights and prevention of exploitation, human trafficking, stigmatisation and xenophobia, among others, should continue to be prioritised by the Organisation.

18. These priorities largely relate to the Organisation's priority areas of Migration and Development, migrants in crisis situations; perceptions of migrants; human rights and prevention of exploitation, to mention a few.

Mr President,

19. Some countries in Africa are either country of origin or of transit for irregular migrants wishing to reach Asia and Europe by sea.

20. African countries continue in their efforts to reign in the phenomenon which is yet to be brought under control. The cooperation with, and help from neighbouring countries, in fact countries of final destination, constitute an urgent need, which may also be in line with their own obligations under the International Humanitarian and Human Rights laws and their constant pledge to promote and to protect human rights universally.

21. While strongly appreciating the engagement of the partners in dealing with the irregular migration phenomenon, Africa feels disappointed by the recent

cessation of the Italian “Mare Nostrum” operation which saved more than 100.000 lives and arrested over 500 traffickers. While we fully understand that it is a costly operation, we equally urge that the cessation be reviewed and the operation resumed as a transitional mechanism to save thousands of human lives.

22. The Africa Group is of the view that a twofold approach should be adopted. For the short term, to provide the necessary funds to allow the continuation of rescue activities in the Mediterranean and for the long term, to adopt a strategic approach with a strong development focus to tackle one of the main root causes of displacement.

23. The Africa Group welcomes the financial proposals for the 2015 Programme and Budget which reflect some increase for the continent and the programmed support to Africa during emergency and crisis situations. These increments are in the right direction in view of growing challenges that confront the continent.

Mr. President

24. Africa continues to receive the major share of the IOM Development Fund under Line 1 and Line 2. As a region, we register our appreciation. We note the projects approved under the Fund in 15 African countries.

25. In conclusion, may I on behalf the Africa Group welcome the Independent State of Samoa and the new observers to the IOM family.

I thank you.